From Mrs. G. P. Macdonell.

40, Lansdowne Crescent,
Notting Hill, W.

GEORGE PAUL MACDONELL.

George Paul Macdonell

B
Macd.

IN MEMORIAM.

George Paul Macdonell

GRANT ALLEN

"The hand of the reaper
Takes the ears that are hoary,
But the voice of the reaper
Wails manhood in glory.
The autumn winds rushing
Waft the leaves that are serest,
But our flower was in flushing
When blighting was nearest."

LONDON:—
PERCY LUND AND CO., LTD.,
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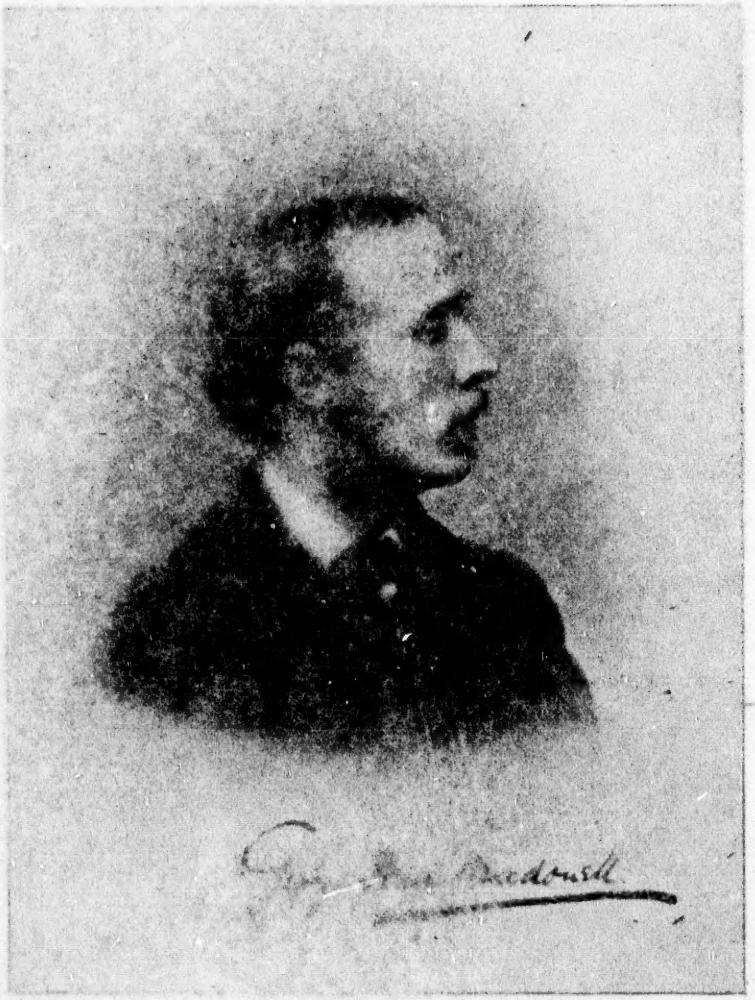

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"From Maximus I learned self-government, and not to be led aside by anything; and cheerfulness in all circumstances, as well as in illness; and a just admixture in the moral character of sweetness and dignity, and to do what was set before me without complaining. I observed that everybody believed that he thought as he spoke, and that in all that he did he never had any bad intention; and he never showed amazement and surprise, and was never in a hurry, and never put off doing a thing, nor was perplexed nor dejected, nor did he ever laugh to disguise his vexation, nor, on the other hand, was he ever passionate or suspicious. He was accustomed to do acts of beneficence, and was ready to forgive, and was free from all falsehood; and he presented the appearance of a man who could not be diverted from right rather than of a man who had been improved. I observed, too, that no man could ever think that he was despised by Maximus, or ever venture to think himself a better man. He had also the art of being humorous in an agreeable way."

Marcus Aurelius, I., 15

In Memoriam.

George Paul Macdonell.

A GREAT life, a noble life, a beautiful life is its own best memorial. Those who knew George Macdonell as he really was, will need no monument of him save their store of fragrant memories. Some, even, who did not know him may be the better for his short presence here amongst us, since every pure soul diffuses an influence which spreads far wider than its personal environment. I shall not attempt to write George Macdonell's biography; I desire only to set down briefly here for those who loved him a few recollections of the

profound way in which he impressed many of his contemporaries.

Potentiality and achievement are two different things. The world judges men for the most part by what they have succeeded in doing; the chosen few judge them by what they are. Tried by this higher and truer standard, George Macdonell was among the noble men of our generation.

Not that he did not also accomplish much. His life work, though cruelly cut short, was considerable. But in every age the number of men who possess the special power of externally realizing themselves by their own creations is very small. They often loom too large in the eyes of their successors. To them alone is it granted to outlive their generation, though it is by no means certain that in every instance they are its loftiest representatives. I certainly feel that several of the most far-reaching, some of the purest spirits I have known were those of men and women who have left no mark, as the world judges, upon their age and society; who have directly influenced few save their immediate acquaintances. Yet certain men of this type so deeply impress the small circle who know them,

that the waves of their being touch an ever-widening outer world. A notable case in point is Arnold Toynbee. Those who knew George Macdonell, and those who loved him—the two groups are but one—must have felt that he came under this category. Unknown by the great public, he was yet recognised and admired by his own small world as a strenuous thinker, a sterling character, and an ever loyal friend.

It is the rare combination of high qualities in Macdonell that makes the task of speaking about him a peculiarly difficult one. One hardly knows on which side of that beautiful, strong nature to begin one's description. He summed up in himself so many excellences. High intellect, powerful character, personal charm, do not often live together in one and the same individuality. George Macdonell had them all—and in equal measure. About his unusual mental gifts I will speak later, and leave others to speak with higher authority. But of his character I must say something at the outset. He was one of those men who reconcile one to human nature. His integrity was like a rock; he had the most perfectly moral nature I have ever met

with. I knew him well, and I do not remember a single act or word—not even a look or a hasty phrase—that fell short in any way of ideal morality. His intellectual honesty was beyond fear of reproach. He was justice personified. No shadow of prejudice ever disturbed his calm and equable judgment.

In too many cases high character is austere and unapproachable. It tends rather to repel than to attract advances. But George Macdonell, though good with a goodness one has seldom seen equalled, was conspicuous above everything for his magnetic power of drawing others instinctively towards him. Everybody *loved* him. I have been privileged to look over the many heart-felt letters of regret and sympathy addressed to his wife in her irremediable loss by all classes and types of those who knew him—eminent lawyers, important thinkers, fellow townsmen, persons of a humbler position—and I noticed that both in these and in the words of his acquaintances the one adjective which cropped up about him oftenest was "lovable." Who could wish for a better? And when, on that last sad day at Woking, his body, flower-covered, was borne away from us in the bare little chapel to be reduced

to ashes, it was with difficulty that I restrained myself from crying aloud from my heart, "Dear George, good-bye! You know how we all loved you!"

* * * * * *

George Paul Macdonell was born on January 2nd, 1855, at the small village of Rhynie, in Aberdeenshire. A Celtic Highlander by descent and by characteristics, he united the sweet and charming side of the Celtic nature with the robust strength and underlying solidity of the Aberdonian Pictish temperament. His father was James Macdonell, an excise officer; his mother, Rachel Allardyce, a cousin of the painter, John Philip, R.A. Eleven children grew up to maturity, many of whom have in various ways carved out for themselves high places in life, and in the respect and esteem of the best among their contemporaries. The father was a Catholic, devout though liberal-minded; the mother a Presbyterian. To that combination of conditions I incline to attribute not a little of George Macdonell's singular balance of mind and fairness to opponents. Descent from persons who have changed their religion, or from a

family of mixed faith, tends to broaden the outlook of a sincere thinker. It is true, George received a Catholic education only in his very early days; but the atmosphere of doubt and religious reasoning which such antecedents imply, is surely one of deep intellectual and moral value. Certainly in George's later life dogmatism was the very last fault of which anyone could have accused him; more often his friends felt inclined to complain, with half humorous regret, of his severe impartiality, his judicial attitude, his readiness to allow every possible point that could be made against his own side or his own interests. He always saw so clearly everything which might be urged against his personal view of any subject that he seemed (only seemed) sometimes lacking in steady faith and sound partisanship, to those among us whose habit it is rather to choose a side in life, and battle for it sturdily, if somewhat blindly, with all the weapons we know how to handle. To such, George's attitude was at times well-nigh *too* all-sided; one half longed for a little touch of human injustice.

Soft and gently Celtic in his external characteristics, yet strong at core with Aberdonian grit and solidity, George Macdonell grew up in his native

county, his body strengthened by the keen air of its open moors, his character braced by the austere simplicity of his life. He lost his father early, and thenceforth the family became wholly Presbyterian. When he was about six years old, the household removed to Aberdeen, and a year or two later to the adjoining town of Old Aberdeen, a sleepy, picturesque, and uncommercial adjunct of the cold granite city, having little reason for existence apart from its University, the intellectual centre of the Pictish nation. George received the basis of his very solid education at the Old Aberdeen Grammar School, familiarly known as the "Old Barn," but none the less celebrated as a training house of most able scholars. For the long-headed Aberdonians have given in our time more famous men to Britain at large than any other group of equal size in the whole of our islands.

"He was accounted an excellent pupil there," says his sister, Annie, "being very steady, very serious. He was popular out-of-doors, too, playing football and cricket with zest. Not all his mental work was done for his master at school. We used to have—they have disappeared in our many wanderings—a bundle of his essays. A few

of them, but not nearly all, were school exercises, studies of some of the English poets—Thomson, Gray, and Crabbe were the subjects of three of them. They were of a very elaborate character for a schoolboy of fourteen or fifteen, closely analytical, thoughtful in their judgments, and certainly contained all the biographical information that could possibly have been gathered from the rather scanty libraries at his command. His deepest interest in his younger days was literature, though good thinking and the perfect expression of it, perhaps always appealed to him more than purely imaginative qualities. The study of literature was begun very early, and carried on without much help at school or college, where the opportunities, so far, at least, as English literature is concerned, were scanty enough.

"He had early artistic tastes, if not ambitions, and used to spend much time with a cousin painting landscapes and interiors in water colours. As to his character and demeanour as a young boy, he was sober in manner, very equable in temper, and an inexhaustible asker of questions."

At sixteen, he entered Aberdeen University,

where he remained for the usual four-year course, consistently working, taking many prizes, and "much respected by his fellow students and Professors." That last half unconscious touch of his sister's is eminently characteristic. For respect was the emotion which, next to love, he oftenest excited. A few days after he was so cruelly taken from us, I met the editor of a London paper for which George Macdonell had done much admirable work, and we spoke together of our common loss. "Above all other men I ever knew," he said, "Macdonell was respect-worthy." That opinion was universal. Second only to his lovableness, his sterling character was certainly the point everybody most noted in him.

At twenty, George graduated with high distinction in Classics and Mental Philosophy, taking the Hutton prize and the Seafield Gold Medal. In many ways, I think, his temperament was academic, while his knowledge of Greek and Latin, so far as I could judge, seemed to me greatly beyond our Oxford average. For Psychology and Philosophy, he had the marked native Aberdonian bent; the Pictish love of reasoning things out to the very bottom: his mind, indeed, had a peculiar subtlety

which I have seen approached in two other friends only, both now taken from us, and both marked, like him, more by promise than performance—Richard Shute, and George Romanes. He loved to follow out a subject to its minutest ends; to refine and refine again; to look at it all round till it grew elusive. The strongest intellectual influence brought to bear upon him at this time, however, was that of Professor Bain, who must have done much to correct this native tendency, and to encourage the sounder and more practical judgment, which at all times fought for mastery in him with the metaphysical Scotch temperament.

After taking his degree, he went for a while to Dunkirk, as tutor to a Scotch family residing there. This gave him an opportunity of acquiring a good knowledge of French, and also of seeing not a little of Belgium, of whose old towns and Flemish art he often spoke with great affection. At twenty-two or twenty-three he returned to Aberdeen and began to teach in the Grammar School. Perhaps this discipline contributed to form in him that deliberately just, that studiously fair habit of mind for which he was afterwards conspicuous. All who

knew him knew well that whatever George Macdonell said was said with due thought, and because he believed it. His moderation was a salient feature. No hasty conclusion, no verbal exaggeration ever seemed to come from him unawares. Yet he was never pedantic, and certainly never priggish. One prized in him the complete absence of that precisian mood which sometimes accompanies habits of rigid accuracy. Always moderate himself, he was singularly tolerant of extremes in others. And this very toleration did one good. It was impossible to talk with him on any point, on which one entertained a strong opinion, without feeling at the end of the conversation how much more might be said than one had thought before for the opposite standpoint. This was true even when he took the same side as his interlocutor; for his deep sense of justice, not unaided by the innate Scotch love of a good argument for its own sake, led him often to correct or modify in others exaggerated statements of his own position. It braced one to discuss with him; one invariably left off some degrees the wider for his broadening influence and moderating good sense.

In 1879 he left Aberdeen for the English Bar.

It must have been about this time, I think, that my wife and I first met him.

The beauty of his face, through which a soul shone out,—"as if a star were on his brow," as the late Mr. Cotter Morison once said of him—the charm of his manner, wherein a spotless nature showed itself, took us instantly by storm. To see was to like him; to know was to love. His face always reminded me of the Italian painters' ideal Christ; the earliest thing one noticed in it was its pensive tinge of soft Celtic melancholy. This seemed to betoken rather tenderness and gentleness than strength of character; it was only on closer acquaintance that one began to perceive the firmness of purpose, the inflexible integrity, the immense power of will that lurked unsuspected behind the gentle curves of that lovable mouth. His hand was soft as velvet to soothe and charm, but unyielding as iron to strike where need was in defence of right or in the cause of justice. This latter element however, rarely came to the front. It was the infinite tenderness, the soft humanity of the man that oftenest appeared and appealed to one. Even the strong sense of humour, seldom

denied to the Celt, did not show itself all at once.

We went away frankly in love with him. The sweetness of his smile straightway won our hearts; so did the graceful deference and polish of his manner—a deference which, as we afterwards learned, never melted for a moment into any unworthy concession, any temporary slip from his high sense of independent dignity. He deferred in non-essentials; when it came to opinion, to argument, to principle, he yielded no jot or tittle to man or woman.

On January 10th, 1880, he married. Of his married life, I will not say much here: those who knew him and his wife do not need to be told by what exceptional links of close affection and mutual devotion they were bound to one another. Their union was one of the few thoroughly happy ones I have ever known. George's marriage brought him into contact with a new circle—that brilliant group which centred round the hospitable home in Harley Street, and later in Sheffield Gardens. Gradually, those who were admitted to his intimacy began to see great things in George Macdonell, and to expect great things from him. He had a splendidly

equipped brain, rare industry and power of work, high aims and ambitions, motives more powerful than any mere personal interests.

Success was not his goal. Still we looked forward to see him win it, and that of the best, not merely at the bar, but in politics, literature, and the other fields of his manifold activity. Everybody felt that recognition, reputation, wealth, honour, dignity, could not be far from him. It seemed only a question of how long they would be deferred. They must have come in time. That death might come first, was what those who knew him never once anticipated.

"The world knows nothing of its greatest men," said Sir Henry Taylor. That is not true as it stands; many, if not most, of the greatest men do really emerge sooner or later, if time be granted them. But it *is* quite true that the world, in the wider sense, often fails to discover some, at least, of its very greatest. "In the wider sense," I say, for true greatness, even when allied with shrinking and self-effacing modesty, as it was in George Macdonell's case, cannot fail to impress those with whom it personally comes in contact. And he did very

deeply impress men of all types and classes, among whom were not a few of his most important contemporaries. As barrister, he had close connections with some of our foremost lawyers, who placed implicit reliance upon his judgment and his unsurpassable industry. As man of letters, he was trusted and respected by every editor with whom he had dealings. "Whatever Macdonell undertook to do, he did perfectly," said one of them to me lately. As friend and companion, he was universally loved and deeply regarded. Wherever I think of him—at the Savile, at the National Liberal, on the golf links, in the cricket field—he was a favourite; at his coming, we brightened up; at his gentle smile, we smiled responsive. I spent a Whitsuntide with him once under the hospitable roof of our common friend, Edward Clodd, at Aldeburgh, and I well remember how much all his fellow-guests were struck by his learning, his modesty, his personal charm, his kindly humour, his acuteness of mind, his quick reasoning faculty.

Why, then, with qualities so rare, did we not see him a Queen's Counsel, a Judge, or a leading light of Parliament? The reasons were

many; a main one was that time was not granted him. If Darwin had died at fifty, he would have been remembered merely as the promulgator of an interesting theory of Coral Reefs, and the author of a fascinating journal of scientific travel. George Macdonell, dying at forty, will notwithstanding his clear, keen mind, his pure, great character, be thought of outside his own immediate circle only as the author of an admirable essay in a volume of Irish history, the writer of some excellent short biographies and articles, and the beginner of a learned and philosophical work on a legal subject. In the few small pieces of his accomplished toil, his achievement, indeed, was well-nigh perfect; for he was master at once of the matter of his subject and of a lucid style. But to the world at large, which pays by results, these are all there is to show for a life's labour.

Far different is the judgment of those who knew him personally. I am permitted to transcribe here a few stray sentences from the many letters of regret and sympathy addressed by his friends to his family—letters which in almost every case are marked by a striking absence of mere conventional

expressions of condolence and regard, and by an unmistakable note of genuine distress and affection.

"My friend and former pupil," writes Lord Justice Rigby, in whose service he had long employed his splendid talents and his singular industry, "was a man for whom I had a great regard and esteem, and I looked forward with confidence to a time at which his character and great ability would secure for him a conspicuous position in the profession which he was so honourably practising.

"It will some day be a consolation to you to realize how completely he had won the affection and confidence of all who came into close relations with him.

"I always esteemed myself most fortunate in having learnt to know him, and look back with mingled grief and gratitude to my association with him in professional matters, and to the valuable service which he rendered me."

Seen from another side—the side of journalism and literature—his friend and mine, Mr. J. S. Cotton, the editor of the *Academy*, wrote of him in that paper :—

"It is with a keen sense of personal loss that we record the death of Mr. G. P. Macdonell, for many years a valued contributor to the *Academy*. He had gone to spend Whitsuntide, with friends in the neighbourhood of Haslemere. There he caught a chill, which rapidly developed into pneumonia; and there he died, peacefully and in his sleep, on the evening of the 9th of June. He had just completed his fortieth year. Everything that he wrote was marked by an extreme regard for accuracy, and by a broad philosophical outlook. In addition, he took a strong interest in politics, being a member of the National Liberal, and a regular attendant at meetings of the Eighty Club.

"But law, literature, and politics were only a part of George Macdonell's life. He had a genius for friendship, which fascinated all who came under the charm of his pensive face and winsome smile. However busy he might be, he always found time to give counsel and help to those who asked him for it. In congenial company, he was an admirable talker, not insisting overmuch on his own opinions, but brightening every subject with

humour and sympathy. To have known such a man—so wise, so modest, so exemplary in every relation—is the best of antidotes for latter-day cynicism."

His political activity I cannot pass over in silence. A lover of equity, profoundly imbued at bottom with those deeper conceptions of public right as against private interest, which are a noble heritage of the Celtic race in Britain, he was necessarily a Liberal of the most advanced school, and an enthusiast in the cause of justice to Ireland. Yet even here, his very enthusiasm was tempered by constitutional moderation. He would spend himself for the cause, in frequent journeyings to Ireland, and speeches in her behalf, but he would not exaggerate. While his heart was profoundly engaged in the struggle for right, his intellect kept him so carefully in the attitude of balanced reason and suspended judgment, that he almost seemed at times to take the opposite side in argument, out of pure fear of intellectual injustice or partiality. In spite, however, of this most un-Irish virtue, he secured the friendship of many representative Irishmen, as he deserved the gratitude of the whole

nation, which only his modesty and his shrinking from publicity prevented him from receiving in fuller measure. It was with good reason, therefore, that Mr. T. P. O'Connor wrote of him in the *Sunday Sun*:—

"I saw with poignant regret the announcement of the death of George Macdonell. It is only those who knew the man that can appreciate the feelings of sorrow with which his disappearance will fill many a heart. His was one of the quiet, gentle and retiring natures that are known but to intimates, and that seek self-effacement as eagerly as other men practise self-advertisement. He belonged to the same gifted family as James Macdonell—the well-known journalist, who died prematurely—and as John Macdonell, the editor of the "State Trials." George Macdonell had immense, though quiet, enthusiasm, singular clearness and independence of judgment, and a heart of gold. He was one of that quiet band of enthusiasts who were pioneers in the struggle for justice to Ireland; and he adhered to the cause through evil and good report with the same steadiness. I had been thinking of the phrase

which would best sum up his character; and there occurred to me that which Carlyle applied to his wife in his historic epitaph on her tomb. That phrase is 'soft invincibility.' To the wife who loved him so deeply, to all his relatives, I tender my sincere sympathy in a loss which is felt by them more profoundly than by others, but is shared by hundreds who had no tie to George Macdonell save that which a noble and beautiful nature is capable of creating."

Testimonies like these poured in from every side as soon as the small world of those who knew him began to realise their loss. Yet it is characteristic of George's shrinking modesty and self-effacement, to which Mr. O'Connor refers, that even his own family were surprised to learn the high esteem in which he was held outside it—an esteem never doubted for a moment by his friends. "We did not know what people thought of him," his wife's mother said to me pathetically. "He never told what praise others gave him." Mr. Fletcher Moulton does but voice the universal opinion when he writes:—

" . . . His legal ability was splendid. His thought was always as clear and as accurate as his expression of it was lucid. Had he had less modesty, he must long ere this have been among the foremost in his profession. But we all knew that, sooner or later, success must come to him; and that when it came, it would be full and complete. We never thought that he would be snatched away at the very commencement of that success he had so merited. But it was not too soon for him to have made himself appreciated by all those for whose good opinion he would have cared."

To much the same effect, as regards his legal abilities, Mr. Justice Stirling writes :—

"I hope you will allow me to add that I think his removal from amongst us a great loss to the profession of the law. I believe his intended contribution to legal literature would have been of permanent value, and given him a high standing amongst us: but over and above all this, I always looked on him as one of the very salt of a body such as ours, and one whom we can ill afford to spare from our ranks."

Here again is the judgment of a practical man, Mr. George Gibb, the manager of the North Eastern Railway, who writes to George's brother, Mr. John Macdonell:—

" . . . He was rising steadily and doing fine work in the world; a man that can ill be spared. I was asked only three days ago to whom a difficult case—not railway—should be sent, and I recommended your brother as one of the most able and soundest advisers I knew at the Bar. His work for us in railway matters was always so thoroughly and well done."

While on the other hand, this is what Professor Edgeworth says in a letter to the same brother:—

"I hear with deep regret of the great loss which you—which I myself—have suffered.

"The cheerful companion of my tramps, an ever welcome visitor of the Savile, the most candid disputant whom I ever encountered on political and economic topics which are heating to most minds—the loss of such a friend is indeed very great."

These two last contrasted letters form a wonderful tribute to George's catholicity and versatility of

mind. It is not often that one and the same man can deserve and gain such glowing praise from such different quarters—from the worker and the thinker —the man of action and the man of philosophic and academic culture. It was due to our dear friend's all-sidedness that he called forth regard so universal and so warm. His intellect was equal to whatever it touched. In the field of abstract thought as in that of practical work, no task he had to perform ever seemed to baffle him.

It is not always the high placed ones of the world, however, who give the praise which most speaks to our hearts. Out of all the letters which Mrs. Macdonell received in her moment of terrible and unspeakable bereavement, I do not know that any better deserves to be reproduced in full than the beautiful words which Lord Justice Rigby's clerk thus touchingly wrote to her under cover to her mother:

"Dear Madam,

"I received your kind and gracious letter addressed to me as well as to those of my fellow clerks whose good fortune it had been to be associated in a humble way with dear Mr. Macdonell who has gone from us.

"I attended the last sad rites at Woking yesterday, not only at the wish of the Lord Justice, but at my own.

"His Lordship, as you are aware, forms one of a court of three judges and could not attend.

"Nothing I can say, dear Madam, can sufficiently express the sincere grief I feel at his most untimely death, and the respectful admiration I had for his great talents. He was a hard worker, and I fear overworked himself, so that I was always sincerely glad when he was able to take his all too short vacations.

"His quiet, kindly and pleasant bearing to us, so much his inferiors, made any kind of service to him a pleasure as well as a duty, and could not fail to win our respect and affectionate regard.

"I and my late colleagues in chambers deeply regret his premature end, the more so as he had undoubtedly overcome the initial difficulties of his profession, and had just entered upon the path leading to prosperity and distinction in it.

"We shall never forget his kindly features, and for myself I can say that I shall always

revere his memory as one of the most perfect gentlemen I ever met.

"I trust Mrs. Macdonell is keeping fairly well, and assuring you both of my respectful sympathy,

I am, dear Madam,

Your obedient servant,

H. PLEASANCE.

A few more tributes from friends I venture to include, because they seem to me to say things illustrative of certain aspects of his character far better and more convincingly than I could say them. Dr. Bridges writes:—

"How his admirable clearness of judgment was helped by his freedom from the small unworthy passions that harass the immense majority of us!

"'The soul of the wise man should be like a mirror, free from rust,' Roger Bacon says. His was such."

"I cannot but tell you," says Mr. Francis Storr, "what you must have heard already from so many, that I have lost in George one of my most sterling and trusted friends. I think how

often I have consulted him on questions of politics and public interest, knowing his clear vision and unwarped, unbiassed judgment. I never knew a man with so unruffled a temper, "

Christianus."

"The blow that has deprived you," Mr. Felix Moscheles writes, "of the best of husbands strikes at his many friends, near and far, and at the larger groups of men for whom he worked so bravely. It is for us all to labour on as he did, pursuing the highest moral aims, each of us following his example in our own sphere, however small and subordinate that may be."

My friend, Mr. William Prince, a solicitor with whom George had frequently acted, writes in much the same strain :—

"I feel that I have lost a personal friend of singular charm of manner, sweetness of disposition, and keenness of intellect, and a trusted professional adviser of rare talent and research. Not to speak of his relations and friends, the world is a loser by his untimely death."

Another solicitor, Mr. E. Kell Blyth, dwells more especially on his professional career :—

"He was coming forward in his profession, and had reached a point at which his progress would probably have been rapid, as his great legal knowledge and legal acumen were recognised by the heads of the Bar. I had special opportunities for observing this at a consultation where I met him with Mr. Buckley, Q.C., in a case of some importance, in which he acted for me about a month ago. The courteous deference which Mr. Buckley — the leading company authority of the day—showed him, and with which he consulted him as to the decisions affecting the question, showed in what high esteem his legal knowledge was held. His loss will be a great one both to his friends and to the profession, of which he would have been an ornament."

So much for that sad might-have-been. It is happier to turn to thoughts of what actually *was*—to the bright, genial nature, the soft, sunny smile, the kindly thoughtfulness of the man, who, as Mr. Stebbing well says, with great mental gifts and a career of high promise, was "wholly without enemies." I never knew anyone say anything unkind, anything even just a little unfriendly about

him. No one smiled at a weakness, no one hinted at a fault. I do not think I am exaggerating when I say I have never known a more perfect character. If ever he made me whimsically angry for a moment, it was only because he combated some too hastily formed opinion, some too broadly expressed generalisation, which my own judgment told me one second later he was right in correcting with his lucid impartiality.

His wife has allowed me to print here, for the perusal of those friends who alone will read these pages, a brief extract from a letter addressed to her from Aberdeen by George shortly before their marriage. It contains a little character-sketch which seems to her to recall in more than one way certain traits of her own lost husband:—

"Well, then, it is near midnight,

'That calm and pleasant time,
When stars break into splendour, and poets into rhyme.'

Then John and Agnes are here, and after walking part of the evening and talking the rest of it, have gone to bed wearied out. Everybody has followed, all but the one that does not belong to himself. And he, after lazily reading some

Greek and telling himself that he knows nothing about it and is too sleepy to take advantage of it even if he did, has now got himself into an easy chair, poked the fire, put his feet on the fender, and in this epicurean position feels himself entitled to talk as much nonsense as he likes. His desk—for I shall be as minute as if I were writing a new 'Pepys's Diary'—his desk is a delightful book that possibly you have read. It is a volume of M. Doudan's letters, published two or three years ago. John brought it with him from Rolandi's, and I recognised it as one that had given me much delight when I first saw it at Dunkerque. M. Doudan was tutor to the Duc de Broglie, and what is more, as nearly a perfect specimen as we can have now-a-days of the mind given up to pure literary culture. Too much so, perhaps. His name is a text for those who preach the baneful effects of excessive reading. He read, and read so much that he had not confidence to produce anything of note. It needs a mind of no ordinary energy to read and be independent—to read and to think—to work oneself into the position of another mind, and not to rest there

lazily. This M. Doudan accomplished; he does think, acutely and independently, and writes most charmingly. This, with the purity of his life and the gentleness of his manner, explains the enthusiasm with which his contemporaries speak of him."

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George's death came as a terrible shock to his friends. It was wholly unexpected. We had been so long accustomed to look forward and count upon a brilliant future for him, so long accustomed to ask ourselves, "When will George Macdonell come into his own?" that we could hardly realise at first how fate had defrauded him of it. He did not work for money, nor even for fame; but we felt sure none the less that both money and fame would, in due time, come to him. For himself, he wrought always for far other aims—partly with the good craftsman's honest pride in turning out well the particular piece of work, however dry, that happened to be entrusted to him, but partly also in a wider way for the general service and bettering of humanity. Yet we who looked on and loved him, we, who longed for his sake for substantial recompense, we waited every

day to see the result of so much earnest and honest toil—legal, social, political—return upon him at last in some concrete reward of wealth, honour, or reputation. While we watched, our dear, calm friend was taken from us, and all our bright hopes for him vanished for ever.

He had overworked himself systematically, allowing himself no sufficient change or respite. And perhaps his constitution was that fallaciously strong one, found in too many Aberdonians of great mental vigour — Minto, Robertson Smith, Cotter Morison, Croom Robertson—whom we have seen snatched from us in the same generation, with their life-work unfinished. George left more friends to deplore his loss than any man I can remember. His death came to many households as a personal grief, and afflicted them with a sense of irreparable bereavement.

It is not, however, in his blighted prime, that we will think of him hereafter in our calmer hours. It is not the sad end, but the lovely life that will ever live with us. We will think of him rather on the links at Aldeburgh, under the beeches at Dorking, stretched at full length among the heather

at Hind Head, or engaged in lively discussion with listening friends on the padded seats in the smoking-room of the Savile. We will think of the kindly smile, of the ready welcome, of the sense of peace and calm which he diffused around him, of his moderating influence on heated social or political disputation. He was a reposeful man. He seemed, indeed, to act upon a society of men with something like the restraining and purifying power of a good woman. Conversation grew better and higher in tone for Macdonell's presence; nobody would have cared to say before him anything mean or coarse or unworthy. "His friends," as a writer in *The Times* most truly said, "will not soon forget that beautiful nature, which, in every relation of life, freely gave, never exacted, never murmured; full of generous interest; content to be itself and to look out in a spirit of gentle irony upon the result." As I think of him, there comes to my mind that exquisite quatrain of William Watson's:—

> "'Tis human fortune's happiest height to be
> A spirit melodious, lucid, poised and whole.
> Second in order of felicity
> I hold it, to have walk'd with such a soul."

That happiness was ours. We shall cherish the memory of it while we live in a world no longer made brighter by his ennobling presence.

APPENDICES.

I.

A REMINISCENCE.

I cannot recollect exactly when and where I first saw George Macdonell. I think it must have been at one of the pleasant Sunday evenings at Mr. and Mrs. Hertz's house, in Harley Street. I know that I became interested in him as soon as I heard that he was to marry their daughter. Close intimacy and friendship grew up after the marriage. He attracted me from the first. Though endowed with but a poor memory for personal details, I am still able to recall with a pleasurable distinctness his face, his smile, and certain intonations of his voice. The gentle manner, the spiritual refinement, the invariable courtesy, the delightful blending of a true

philosophic gravity with a responsive alertness of mind, and with something of a boyish love of fun; all these characteristics and others, as I got in time to know them, drew me to him strongly. I came to feel a strange complex charm in his mere presence, so that when I chanced to meet him at the Savile Club, or better still on one of Leslie Stephen's "Sunday Tramps," I experienced a peculiar gladness. He was one of the few men I have known, whose very person seemed to radiate a benign influence that gave one a sense of warmth and comfort when near him. It is this feeling which his name most directly brings back to me now, linked to the image of his calm, friendly eyes. At the gathering of the "Tramps" in the Metropolitan Railway Station, or it might be on leaving the train, I often found myself drawn to his side, without any conscious intention of singling him out as my companion. The peaceful mood of a Sunday ramble came to me with the sight of his thoughtful and winning face, and the low tones of his voice. I cannot remember with exactness any of our numerous talks. They were, I know, about most of the things that occupy a studious Londoner of to-

day. His views of men, of public events, of books, seemed to me always to have in them the quiet scrutiny and the gentle toleration of his eyes. He impressed me as a man of judgment, of judgment at once strong and subtle, in whom the habit of rigid accuracy, and a carefully-trained logical faculty, were tempered by generous sympathies. Stories gathered from the University, from the world of politics and law, enlivened these conversations, and brought out at once his penetrative insight and agreeable humour. His talk reflected in the most unostentatious of ways the wide range of his learning and knowledge. Indeed what chiefly struck me in these unstudied outpourings was the modesty that had its root in his rarely selfless nature. This trait, whose effect was heightened by his essentially masculine vigour of character connects itself with that ingrained readiness to enter into the thoughts and feelings of others, which made him not only so charming a companion, but, as I can testify from my own experience, so prompt and practical a helper. One may sometimes be disposed to regret that these high qualities were incompatible with the emphatic, pertinacious self-assertion, which appears

now-a-days to be a condition of rapid social and professional advancement. Yet it was perhaps better for him, as it certainly is better for the friends who will cherish his memory, that he realized his fine personality in his own unobtrusive fashion.

Rarely as Macdonell and I were able to meet in this dividing London, the loss of no other friend has affected me with a deeper sense of lonesomeness. It has revived the feeling of desolation which invaded me when I heard of Robert Louis Stevenson's death, far away though he was in the South Pacific. Stevenson I knew less well personally, though I felt I had done much to fill up the gaps in my knowledge by reading his printed talk. George Macdonell had for me the same kind of value as Stevenson. Like him, he always seemed to me a strange blossom on that rugged tree, the Scottish race. In both, the rocky substratum of the national character, though peeping out here and there, was clothed with all manner of beauteous and sweet-scented growths. Both had a gracious dignity of bearing, a spiritual glance, that read you without alarming, a voice with the ground tones of human tenderness. Both, too, when one was thrown together with them for any

length of time showed a delicate considerateness, which one is wont to find in women rather than in men. And in both lay a gravity, that while not without a touch of northern sombreness, was relieved by frequent flashes of humour and gaiety. Perhaps I over-rate the likenesses of their temperaments and dispositions. What I am sure of is that on me they exercised the same soothingly beneficent power, that in my grateful thought they will live on together, twin types of moral beauty it is a privilege to have known, and whose passing in quick succession has darkened the world.

JAMES SULLY.

II.

FROM ONE WHO KNEW GEORGE INTIMATELY.

The same words rise to one's lips in thinking of George as in thinking of his three brothers, who died early in life. Each had the same lavishly generous nature, the same purity of temperament which made them pass through life not scorning, so much as unconscious of, the uglier and meaner side of human things. When James dropped in the midst of the march, those near to him felt as if they had lost step, and must sink by the wayside, so much had his brave spirit cheered them. When William, a young stranger in Chicago, died there after founding in Illinois the free-trade clubs which

have been the parents of so many similar institutions throughout the States, those who loved and respected and mourned him filled the Cathedral at his funeral. Donald, who died in the forests of Manitoba, after having done in his short twenty-eight years excellent work as an engineer in Russia and Siberia, was loved and mourned by the rough wood-men who were with him; and to those who knew him his memory is a cloudless sky.

Now, suddenly in the midst of his admirable work—George is gone; his place knoweth him no more; and we look round with a sense of irreparable loss. I would not use words of unrestrained or extravagant praise; every feeling forbids it. But memory clings to past sweetness and goodness, and delights to muse on the four lives, all so short, which had each accomplished so much, and were indeed without reproach—pure, manly, upright, waging war with evil by the unconscious loyalty to all that was pure and best in life. All four brothers had high distinction and intellect, but it is not this which fills the largest space, and crowds the mind with the keenest regrets and the tenderest sorrow; it is the thought of the unstained nature, the noble

instinct which guided every intellectual aim and inspired every act. So the lovely memory "blossoms in the dust," and in very truth everything they have left behind "smells sweet."

A. M.

III.

FROM AN IRISHMAN.

My intimacy with George Macdonell was fed from so many sources that it ripened into a sturdy growth. Our common interests were not few. But in this place where the testimony of numerous friends has been gathered together, I think it best that I should speak of my late companion in reference only to a side of his activity of which I was probably the chief witness—his labours in the Irish cause.

George Macdonell took an active part in the Home Rule agitation from the time that the Irish question began to exercise a serious influence upon the mind of the English public. He was one

of a few men who met together in London immediately after the disastrous election of 1886, for the purpose of considering by what means the Irish cause might best be furthered.

Some preliminary consultations were held at the National Liberal Club, and in the month of September there took place the first meeting of the Home Rule Union, when Macdonell was chosen a member of the Executive Committee. He continued a zealous supporter of the organisation until his death.

In connection with the Union, Macdonell lectured frequently, both upon the history of Ireland and upon its present condition. There is no doubt that the active propaganda which was carried on by a small knot of men in the spring of 1887 largely influenced the decision of the Liberal party to take up the Irish question again, and to make Home Rule a leading item in its programme.

As events developed, the work of the Union became more important, and a great number of pamphlets and leaflets were issued. Many of these were written by Macdonell, who was chairman of the Literature Committee.

When the Coercion Bill of 1887 was passed through Parliament, the Union resolved upon sending a deputation to Ireland to express the sympathy of a large section of the English people, and to protest against the suspension of the ordinary law. After a splendid welcome in Dublin, the deputation divided itself into four—one section going to each of the Provinces of Ireland. Macdonell formed part of the North and West detachment, visiting Cavan, Longford, Strokestown, Castlebar, and other towns, and also the Island of Achill. The meetings were often exceedingly picturesque, and were invariably attended by enthusiastic and deeply interested audiences. The second of the series, held in Longford, may be mentioned as typical of them all. A huge crowd awaited the arrival of the train at about six in the autumn evening, and, forming a procession, conveyed the deputation, accompanied by bands, to the Market Place in the centre of the town. After some delay the meeting was organized, and a number of men, each carrying a lighted torch, stood round the edge of a tremendous crowd, that ever and again burst forth into the weird cry of applause

so familiar to Irish ears. The meeting was attended by a large number of policemen. One of these—a shorthand writer, was enclosed by an armed guard, and stood immediately before the speakers. There were always similar preparations against a disturbance, and precautions to provide evidence in case an orator should transgress the limits laid down by the Coercion Law. When Macdonell stood up on the platform, he opened with the words:

"Who fears to speaks of '98,
Who blushes at the name?
When cowards mock the patriot's fate,
Who hangs his head for shame?"

The audience was electrified, and broke into wild shouts of applause.

At Castlebar the deputation was entertained at a public banquet, which the Roman Catholic Bishop of the diocese attended.

Practically the whole population of the various districts turned out to welcome the visitors. Amongst the archives at Dublin Castle many excellent speeches of Macdonell's, delivered upon these occasions, will, no doubt, be long preserved; no prosecution, however, of any of the members

took place, although shortly after that time Mr. Wilfrid Blunt was imprisoned in the West of Ireland, and a year or two later Mr. Conybeare, M.P., who had formed one of the West of Ireland deputation, was incarcerated for a month at Londonderry. Macdonell made many warm friends among all classes of the people, and he continued to the last a welcome visitor to Ireland, his handsome presence, eloquence, ready humour, and broad sympathies endearing him especially to the peasants, who have a lively appreciation of all such good gifts and graces.

The report of the above-mentioned proceedings led the Home Rule Union to start a journal, and from March, 1888, up to May, 1890, this periodical came out every month under Macdonell's able editorship. Many of its articles, as well as a good number of the pamphlets and leaflets issued by the Union, were the fruit of his pen, and all along there was no more assiduous worker in the cause. His political sympathies, of course, were not restricted to the Irish question, but it had always, perhaps, a foremost place in his affections.

THOMAS LOUGH.

IV.

FUNERAL ADDRESS.

We are met together to offer our last words of affectionate farewell to our brother and friend, George Paul Macdonell—before we commit his body to the fire in accordance with his wish and the wish of those whom he has left behind him.

He in whose presence we stand, whilst he sleeps in peace, had himself but a few years ago in this place performed this last rite for the father of his wife. And it is by her express desire that we return to-day to a practice of antiquity, and, following the counsels of science and public health, commit his mortal body, not to the earth but to purifying fire; so that the indestructible ashes that

the fire shall leave may be preserved as a sacred relic with the dust of those who have gone before him. And it is also by the desire of the wife and widow that I stand here as the mouthpiece of the family and the friends—to express our common grief, our affectionate remembrance of the dead, and our humble submission to the inscrutable decree of destiny.

He, whom we now commit to the elements, has been cut off by a sudden stroke in the fulness of his powers and in the height of his promise, leaving his lifework still uncompleted, leaving, alas! a widow with one young child alone in the world.

There come borne in upon our minds those words of sorrow and resignation which have grown familiar to the believers of all creeds. "We fade away suddenly like the grass: in the morning it is green, and groweth up: but in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withered." "So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." "Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery: he cometh up and is cut down like a flower; he fleeth as it

were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay: in the midst of life we are in death."

It was the Oriental mystic who said:—

"And this was all the harvest that I reap'd;
I came like water, and like wind I go!"

But our friend had in him more of the spirit of the Stoic of old and would have said, with the Roman emperor, Marcus Aurelius, "Since it is possible that thou mayst depart from life this very moment, regulate every act and thought accordingly. Do every act of thy life as if it were the last, laying aside all indifference and unreasonable temper and hypocrisy, all self-love. Every moment think steadfastly as a man; do that thou hast in hand with dignity, with affection, with freedom, with justice. If thou workest at that which is before thee, following right reason seriously, vigorously, calmly, keeping thy spiritual path pure, as if thou shouldest be bound to give it back immediately, if thou holdest to this—expecting nothing, fearing nothing, but satisfied with thy present activity, according to nature and heroic truth in every word and sound that thou utterest, thou wilt live happily. He who lives a simple, modest, and contented life, turns not

aside to the right nor to the left from the way that leads to the end of life—to which a man ought to come pure, tranquil, and ready to depart. Do not act as if thou wert going to live ten thousand years; death hangs over thee whilst thou livest: while it is in thy power be good."

It is in no spirit of vain eulogy, but in calm consciousness of sincerity in presence of the sacred remains of our friend that I say—such was his ideal of conduct throughout life. For fifteen years I have had his intimacy, and in his last illness, alone of his friends, I heard his latest uttered thoughts; and of no man whom I ever knew can it be more faithfully said—that he had laid aside unreasonable temper, hypocrisy, self-love; that he did what he had in hand with dignity, affection, with freedom, with justice—following right reason, vigorously, calmly; expecting nothing, fearing nothing. Friends and brothers! his was in truth a simple, modest life; and when, under my eyes, he laid down his head for the last time on his weary pillow, he had come to the end of his life, pure, tranquil, and ready to depart, as one who, whilst it was in his power, strove to be good, useful, true.

Some words of the philosophic emperor about his own father may be fitly applied to our dead friend. "In him I observed mildness of temper, and unchangeable resolution in the things that he had determined, and no vain glory in those things which men call honours, and a love of labour, and perseverance, and a readiness to listen to all who had anything to propose for the common weal; but he showed sobriety in all things, and firmness, and no mean thoughts or actions. There was in him nothing harsh, nor implacable, nor violent: so he lived and so he died, like a soldier at his post waiting the signal which summoned him from life."

These noble words of restrained and most reasoned praise we can now truly use of our friend. And we can say with conviction and humility that he, if ever man did, worked at that which he had in hand seriously, vigorously, calmly: that we have known no man who had more deeply in his nature the love of labour, mildness of temper, unchangeable resolution, sobriety, firmness, and none who was more free from mean thought or act. And I who was beside him in his last days can vouch that he died like a soldier at his post,

tenderly thoughtful of those around him, effacing himself, anxious to spare others, patient, resigned, striving whilst life lasted to be a good man.

His life was short—but very strenuous. And into his brief span of years, his energy, ability, and courage had already enabled him to crowd a lifetime of hard work. In his profession as an advocate and an accomplished jurist, in literature, in politics, he laboured untiringly: and in many a cause and to many an end which he judged to be right and worthy. He was my pupil, my colleague, my fellow-worker. And I can truly say that I have never known a more conscientious worker, a more amiable spirit, a more unselfish and true-hearted man. Of how few men can it be said as I feel impelled to say of George Macdonell—it was morally impossible to him to do a bit of bad work, of unworthy work: it was spiritually impossible to him to do an unkind act or to pursue a selfish end?

It is a cruel thought that such a spirit and such promise should be cut short at so early an age. We cannot uproot from our hearts deep personal sorrow at our loss, nor do we seek to stifle

the agony of human affection. Still less can we pretend to any conventional source of consolation. The world around us is full of appalling waste and decay. And here seems to us an inscrutable example of power blighted in its strength. But we sorrow with resignation, and not with a rebellious heart. All things change; and the progress of human nature is made possible only through incessant change. Humanity lives only by the continual incorporation of her servants, as we live only by continual renewal of our corporate nature.

It is then in sorrow, in resignation, and nowise in despair, that we commit to purifying fire the mortal remains of our friend—in sure trust that his work has been done, his part played, and that his best and truest life is yet with us.

We know that such a life as his is not lost upon the earth, is not scattered to the winds, as his tenement of clay is dispersed into the air. Humanity is the greater, the wiser, the stronger, for every good and pure and cultured life that is lived and incorporated into its bosom.

We sorrow not as those who have no hope. We sorrow first in reverence over the end of a

good life,—but in the hope and conviction that the spiritual fruits of such a life abide amongst us. The lives and the works of the good and just are transmitted from generation to generation. Those whom he loved and reared, taught and guided, live with us still to love, to teach, to guide those who are to come. Our hearts keep alive the love of those who are gone; they are with us still in our energies and brains. The beasts perish, and their offspring know them no more, but the just and valiant man does not perish when his body has been laid to rest. The tender words that he spoke ring in our ears more unutterably tender than before; the pure unselfish nature seems transfigured in our memories like the nature of a saint; the strong resolve and the clear will speak to us anew with all the sacred dignity of the ashes in their urn. So that it is in solid assurance and sublime confidence that we can say—Death is swallowed up in victory! So too shall this our brother

Join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence,
So shall he join the choir invisible,
Whose music is the gladness of the world.

In this spirit, in all reverence, and with these hopes, we commit to the elements his body, ashes again to become ashes, earth to become again dust, in certain trust that the life of the good, strenuous, and just man has left the world better than he found it.

FREDERIC HARRISON.

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